Carter IB Middle School

Memo

To: Principal Sanders

From: Carrie Rodgers

CC: Ms. Smith (Dept Chair-English), Mr. Nettles (Dept. Chair-History), Ms. Mackle (Dept. Chair-Civics, Ms. Ramsey (Dept. Chair-Economics)

Date: 29 May 2012

Subject: Global Story-Telling – Project addition to IB curriculum

Our IB students are required to achieve proficiency in international educational standards, which enhances their awareness of their impact on a global scale. In today’s world, students need this awareness in order to become more competitive participants in a highly connected global network, particularly as they proceed into their careers or further education. I am proposing an addition to our current IB curriculum, an implementation of a global project that will partner with cooperating international schools, to create and collaborate on an in-depth but personal reflection of diversified cultures, history, language, governments, and general knowledge on other countries in a creative way. It will be a 12-week project. The length is extensive because the project requires a sufficient amount of time to establish a rapport with partnering students and retrieve extensive information on the various subjects, while allocating enough time to edit and revise the final product.

Since this is a new idea, I would like to explain how the implementation is planned. During the pre-planning stage prior to the beginning of the school-year, the teachers from all cooperating subject areas will collaborate on a unit plan that details the implementation. The students will join the free online website, epals.com, to establish communication with one (or more) partnering international schools. We will already have received approval from participating schools abroad prior to the students contacting them. English teachers will have the students begin writing a creative story to which the international students will add. The grading rubric for the story will focus on: language structure, use of English vocabulary, diction, and grammatical mechanics (spelling, punctuation, etc). All other teachers can choose to incorporate relevant areas to their subjects (i.e. History teachers require a historical comparison of respective countries; Civics require a comparison of government apparatus, etc.). Each class will be responsible for creating, at a minimum, a 5 page “chapter” to the collaborative project, highlighting different aspects of the country such as food, family life, school life, etc. The end product will be a multi-chapter book that details commonalities and differences between countries and can distributed throughout the school.

The collaborative project does have academic merit because it addresses not only Georgia’s Common Core Standards but the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) standards as well. The IBO establishes standards, quite similar to the Common Core standards soon-to-be implemented in Georgia school districts. The difference is the scope, which tends to be more generalized towards global impact, rather than domestic and national academic standards. A few sections of IBO’s standards that this project highlights are:

1. Section A: Philosophy (Standard A2) -- The school promotes international-mindedness on the part of the adults and the students in the school community.
2. Section C: Curriculum (specifically Standard C1) -- A comprehensive, coherent, written curriculum, based on the requirements of the programme and developed by the school, is available to all sections of the school community.

The details of each section and how it pertains to the project can be found at <http://www.ibo.org/>.

My proposal is realistic because it will pique students’ interest in global issues using a familiar medium (Internet) while utilizing a more traditional approach. The only necessary expenditure will be publishing costs if the school decides to provide hard copies of the “book/project”. The advantage is the cost can be offset if “selling” the product is accomplished as a fund-raiser to generate money for the school. The alternative is providing a digital copy to interested students/parents/teachers/community members. Therefore, it not only promotes an international connectivity among our students, but it can also help expand a global perspective among our community as well. Teacher cooperation and collaboration is critical to the success and effectiveness of the project. I ask for everyone’s support and participation in creating an exciting and explorative addition to our curriculum. Logistically, if we all come together, we can surmount any obstacles that each of us may encounter while introducing this project such as language barriers, time-zone differences, technology issues. Since we are all newcomers to the project, we can help each other. This particular project has been successfully completed by other IB schools and the final product was outstanding. It is time to make our impact as educators.

At your earliest convenience, please contact me to schedule a meeting where we can discuss my proposal.